

Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Lomax, March 12, 1799 , from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THOMAS LOMAX J. MSS.

Monticello, Mar 12, 99.

Dear Sir, —Your welcome favor of last month came to my hands in Philadelphia. So long a time has elapsed since we have been separated by events, that it was like a letter from the dead, and recalled to my memory very dear recollections. My subsequent journey through life has offered nothing which, in comparison with those, is not cheerless & dreary. It is a rich comfort sometimes to look back on them.

I take the liberty of enclosing a letter to mr. Baylor, open, because I solicit your perusal of it. It will, at the same time, furnish the apology for my not answering you from Philadelphia. You ask for any communication I may be able to make, which may administer comfort to you. I can give that which is solid. The spirit of 1776 is not dead. It has only been slumbering. The body of the American people is substantially republican. But their virtuous feelings have been played on by some fact with more fiction; they have been the dupes of artful manœuvres, & made for a moment to be willing instruments in forging chains for themselves. But time & truth have dissipated the delusion, & opened their eyes. They see now that France has sincerely wished peace, & their seducers have wished war, as well for the loaves & fishes which arise out of war expences, as for the chance of changing the constitution, while the people should have time to contemplate nothing but the levies of men and money. Pennsylvania, Jersey & N York are coming majestically round to the true principles. In Pensylva, 13. out of 22. counties had already petitioned on the

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alien & sedition laws. Jersey & N Y had begun the same movement, and tho' the rising of Congress stops that channel for the expression of their sentiment, the sentiment is going on rapidly, & before their next meeting those three States will be solidly embodied in sentiment with the six Southern & Western ones. The atrocious proceedings of France towards

this country, had well nigh destroyed its liberties. The Anglomen and monocrats had so artfully confounded the cause of France with that of freedom, that both went down in the same scale. I sincerely join you in abjuring all political connection with every foreign power; and tho I cordially wish well to the progress of liberty in all nations, and would forever give it the weight of our countenance, yet they are not to be touched without contamination from their other bad principles. Commerce with all nations, alliance with none, should be our motto.

Accept assurances of the constant & unaltered affection of, dear Sir, your sincere friend and servant.